

Meeting Minutes
Of the Economic Development Committee

May 20, 2008

Milton Library – Approved at June 17, 2008 meeting

Committee members in attendance: Carla Preston, Sally Harkins, Mike Clark, Tom Huff, Ellen Passman, Alex Donnan, Joanie Martin-Brown

Town public in attendance: Bob Blayney, Melinda Huff, Denny Hughes, Hal Godwin, Barbara

At 6:50 p.m. Martin-Brown called the meeting to order.

The April 15, 2008 Meeting minutes were motioned to approve by Carla Preston and Seconded by Alex Donnan. Discussion followed, Mike Clark corrected Chamber's Executive Director name to read Dalzell. Motion approved.

At 7:00 p.m. Martin-Brown introduced speakers.

Jeff Stone –Director of Infrastructure & Intergovernmental Relations

Heather Keegan- Commercial & Industrial Real Estate liaison for Kent and Sussex Counties.

Martin-Brown had all committee members and town people introduce themselves.

Jeff Stone gave a brief synopsis of how the different departments in the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) work together and what their purpose is.

He stated that Milton needed to be on DEDO radar screen.

Heather Keegan department is available to new companies to help them start up. They are able to assist in finding properties and helps them get up and running. She stated that they needed to be more involved in finding out the needs of the communities. In the past they had focus on New Castle and now needed to put more of a focus on Sussex Co.

Diane Laird, from Main Street project & DEDO work together closely, they are partners. Within the different departments they have specialist that are familiar in helping a business grow bigger, start new, improve marketing, provide training grants and technical assistance.

Martin-Brown called upon Hal Godwin to inform the group what he has been doing for the country as Hal Godwin stated that he has spent most of his time learning about the country and training. He wants to redefine the direction of Sussex Co. What direction should Sussex Co be going in? He believes the country doesn't need any more reports there is a sufficient about of reports being generated already. Bricks & mortar, building has slowed down, Economic Development direction needs to change, and small businesses seem to the future. There is lots of talent in Sussex Co. that needs to be harness.

Jeff Stone noted that Del Tech is a great resource for the committee as they could help in finding out what direction the town should be going in economically.

Martin-Brown proposed that 4 small working groups be established, a plastic file was presented to each group leader. . The working groups are:

1. Entrepreneurship
2. Alternative transportation modes for Milton
3. Review of Town business ordinances
4. Landlord liaison group

Martin-Brown invited Mr. Hughes to serve as liaison for the landlord group. Mr. Hughes' working group would be membered by those he selected and they would work with landlords on incentive proposals that would result in reducing high rent.

Mr. Hughes before he could commit wanted to know what was the plan for the Economic Dev. Comm., what was our vision? Martin-Brown responded that the vision was moving forward under the Main Street umbrella, as inclusion of business leaders and landlords is part of the Main Street program expectations. (NOTE: in s follow up conversation Mr. Hughes agreed to attend the June 17th meeting to pursue this matter, and Mr. Tom Jones a business partner of Irish Eyes Restaurant has agreed to work with Mr. Hughes on this landlord "outreach" effort, as has Tom Huff.

Jeff Stone suggested the committee needed to answer the questions where we wanted to go, what was our vision? What did we want Milton to be a historical or business town? What is our mission statement? Carla Preston volunteered to work on a vision statement, (which has since been done in draft and sent by email to committee members.

Martin-Brown reminded the group that approximately three years ago the then Town administration and the Economic Development Committee worked with Bob Farrell of the University of Delaware to prepare a Town wide survey which was completed and sent out to done to all taxpayers. The returns were compiled, and each of the present Economic Development Committee members had received copies of that survey at the April meeting. **(Please note: Joe Farrell has kindly agreed to address that survey at the June 17th meeting, BEGINNING AT 6:45 p.m. in the Town Library.)**

Alex Donnan volunteered to work on the business ordinances. P.D. Cameninisch and Ed Harris have since agreed to work with Alex on this effort.

Dr. Clendaniel, was unable to attend the meeting to assume leadership of the alternatie transportation working group (golf carts), but Gwen Foehner (who was absent) has since volunteered to lead that effort.

Mike Clark has the entrepreneurship folder at this juncture, as Mark Quigley was absent.

There was some sentiment expressed that forming the small groups be put on hold, but the Chair elected not to do this, as a mission vision statement will be about Main Street, but it will not effect one way of the other way the activities of the four small working groups, as the mission of the Economic Development Committee is to promote business

in the Town Center, as defined by Town Council 4 years ago. Three of the working groups respond specifically to this Committee's generic mission. The "gold cart" effort is a good way to accommodate more parking and reduce pollution which lends itself to protecting public health, historic sites, and increase user friendly access downtown.

Melinda Huff agreed to form an additional working group to put together a proposal to submit in time (June 30 deadline) for a Preservation Grant that would underwrite Heritage Tours, which would also help promote the business climate of downtown as the Chamber's Horseshoe Crab/Shorebird Festival, Holly Festival, and Bargains on the Broadkill do, as well as other Town wide annual events. Bob Blayney and Ellen Passman volunteered to help out with this effort in cooperation with others Melinda may wish to invite to her working group effort.

The motion for th meeting to adjourn was made by Passman, and seconded by Donnan, and unanimously approved.

At 8:00 p. m. the meeting was adjourned.

Draft Submitted by S J Harkins
2nd draft Jmartinbrown